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July 23, 1964

To: Ralph W. Tyler, Director, Center for Advanced Study in the
Behavioral Sciences
From: Bernard Rimland

Following is the "inventory of interests" you requested:

1. Identifying Information

- a. Bernard Rimland (age 35); Director, Personnel Measurement Research Department, U.S. Naval Personnel Research Activity, San Diego, California, Psychology.
- b. BA San Diego State College 1950, Psych. (English minor)
MA " " " " 1951, " (Educ. minor)
Ph.D. Penn State Univer. 1953, " (" ")
- c. 1951-53 Research Asst. then Research Fellow, Instructional Film Res. Program, Penn State.
1953-present Project Director to Department Director, USN Personnel Research Activity.
- d. 1954-present Part time teaching at various colleges in San Diego area. (Adv. Abnormal, Mental Retardation, Individual Differences.)
- e. (Writings) I have authored some forty technical reports (and journal articles) for the Navy on various test development, validation, and application problems, but these would not be considered important outside their immediate context. For present purposes my book Infantile Autism: The Syndrome and Its Implications for a Neural Theory of Behavior, published by Appleton-Century-Crofts (1964) would have to carry the ball as the most important writing.

RIMLAND, B.

2. Catalog of Interests

- a. Infantile Autism and Behavior Theory. Infantile autism is an exceedingly rare form of intellectual defect in children (wrongly called a psychosis) which casts unanticipated light on many subjects, including the nature of perception, motivation, thought and intelligence; the genetic basis of intelligence, affect, and abnormality; and perhaps, the biological basis for these phenomena. I have tried to explicate these ideas in my book. I plan to pursue these ideas while at the Center through reading, discussion with other Fellows and discussion with psychology and medical school people at Stanford and U. of Cal.
- b. Etiology of Abnormal Behavior. In Chapter 3 of the Autism book I point out that the notion of psychogenesis of abnormality (that

psychoses are sometimes "caused" by psychosocial factors) may be no more than a highly prevalent and tenaciously believed myth-- a modern day scientifically sanctioned superstition. I plan to examine this matter in minute detail. Unless unexpected evidence crops up to deter me, I plan to write a book emphasizing the essentially irrational nature of the belief in psychogenesis.

- c. The Improvement of Human Intelligence (especially through biological means applied paranatally). Discussed briefly in Autism book p. 135-146. Man is living in an atomic age with a brain mostly evolved during stone and pre-stone age. Not good enough. No grounds for pessimism on this matter. In fact, some surprising and encouraging data are on hand. Plan to complete a paper and to discuss the matter with Stanford and U. Cal. Med. school staff members.
- d. Prediction of Behavior. Test validities have not risen in decades. The reason, I think, is that current psychometric theories are too committed to behaviorism. That is, they tend to assume that all individual differences are universally and normally distributed. I hope to make some headway against this problem by exploring the consequences of certain methods of analyses I have devised, providing I can get help from someone who knows a lot more math than I do.
- e. What's Wrong With Psychology? Most psychologists will readily agree that psychology has contributed only pitifully to man's knowledge. I have been scouting for ideas on why this is so and what can be done. I have about three papers (on specific faults) in preparation on this topic and will be talking with people trying to find more. Repugnant though the idea is, I've even thought of organizing a symposium on the topic, with emphasis on concrete proposals for improvement.
- f. A Biological Approach to Human Values. As science displaces religion, selfishness becomes more commonplace (because no Hell-fire, because who knows what's right anyway? etc.). I think the benevolence espoused by most religions is an expression of an inborn biologically based reward system, and I think understanding of this matter, if acquired, can go a long way toward improving Man's lot. I want to learn more about this by study and discussion. Some later time, a book should be written on this, if there aren't already six or seven.
- g. Affect^{and Empathy}, Including Relationship to Cognition and to Tactile Stimulation. Some peculiar data were uncovered in my work on autism (p. 182-186 especially) that I would like to understand better. My present plans are essentially to keep alert to ideas along these lines, rather than to spend time trying to track them down.

3. Priorities for 1964-1965

The above topics are presented in their order of priority.